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October 14, 2021

Dear New York State Independent Redistricting Commission:

As the Chair of the Orleans County Legislature, I write today regarding the New York State redistricting process and specifically district lines for the New York State Senate. We implore the commission to consider leaving Orleans and Niagara counties, the heart of the 62<sup>nd</sup> district, together in one district.

One of the precepts of redistricting at any level of government is to preserve communities of common interest. We believe the demographics, economies and shared priorities of Orleans and Niagara counties are the very definition of shared common interest.

To emphasize this point, we share common policy concerns on issues ranging from rural water, expansion of rural broadband, to support for agriculture to Lake Ontario flooding to local control over the expansion of green energy projects, to name just a few. We have a strong history of collaboration and cooperation through NORA (Niagara Orleans Regional Alliance) and our joint priorities have been aided by having shared representation in the New York State Senate.

Redistricting is a complicated process filled with many competing interests. But the bedrock principle of the process is to ensure one person, one vote which means equal representation for all. Equal representation also means respecting historical, cultural and geographic connections of communities across the state to ensure collective concerns are given a voice in the State Senate. And that is again why we emphasize the need for NORA counties to remain together in any senate redistricting map.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Lynne M. Johnson, Chairman  
Orleans County Legislature